

Existing regulations already effectively put hundreds of thousands of acres of forests off-limits to human activity through such laws as the Wilderness Act, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, not to mention a crushing array of California State regulations. This proposal by the Fish and Wildlife Service would vastly expand those restrictions.

This policy seems to be part of a much bigger picture. In Yosemite National Park, for example, the Department of the Interior is proposing to expel longstanding tourist amenities from the valley and lock in a plan that would result in 27 percent fewer campsites than it had in 1997 and 31 percent less lodging. Throughout the Sierra Nevada, the U.S. Forest Service is closing access to roads, imposing cost-prohibitive fees and conditions on cabin rentals, grazing rights, mining and, of course, timber harvesting while obstructing longstanding community events on which many of these towns rely for their tourism.

The one common denominator in these actions is an obvious desire to discourage the public's use of the public's land. Gifford Pinchot, the legendary founder of the U.S. Forest Service, always said the purpose of the public lands was the "greatest good for the greatest number in the long run." John Muir, the legendary conservationist responsible for preserving Yosemite Valley, did so, in the words of the legislation he inspired, for the express purpose of "public use, resort and recreation."

These visions for the sound management of our public lands that were held by the pioneers of our national parks and forest systems are quickly being replaced by elitist and exclusionary policies that can best be described as "look, but don't touch; visit, but don't enjoy."

No one values the natural resources of the Sierra Nevada more than the people who live there and who have entrusted me to speak for them in Congress. These communities have jealously safeguarded the beauty of the region and the sustainable use of the lands for generations. Their prosperity—and their posterity—depends on the responsible use and stewardship of these lands.

Now Federal authorities are replacing these balanced and responsible policies with vastly different ones that amount to a policy of exclusion and benign neglect. We have a sacred obligation to future generations to preserve and protect our public lands, but protecting our public lands for future generations doesn't mean we must close them to the current generation.

OBAMACARE SHOULD BE DELAYED PERMANENTLY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SMITH) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on President Obama to delay his health care mandate for all Americans. ObamaCare is simply too overreaching, too intrusive, too unworkable, and too destructive for families across our Nation and in my home State of Missouri.

In the years since ObamaCare was forced through Congress, the American people's opposition to the mandate has only grown, and rightly so. Americans are seeing skyrocketing premiums, they are losing the health insurance they have, and employers are cutting jobs, hours and wages.

Last week, President Obama admitted that his health care mandate was flawed when he announced he would delay the employer mandate portion of the law for 1 year. Mr. Speaker, we don't need to only delay one section of the law; we need to delay the entire law permanently.

Since the beginning, the only aspect of President Obama's health care law that has been bipartisan is the bipartisan opposition to the mandate. Since 2009, the House of Representatives has voted over 30 times to repeal, defund or dismantle provisions of the law. As the newest Member of Congress, I will stand with my colleagues in pushing to defund and repeal the President's health care mandate.

□ 1030

THE CONSEQUENCES OF GOVERNMENT OVERSPENDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. Speaker, last week in my hometown, thousands of families experienced their first week of a 3-month cut in pay.

These hardworking families aren't unaware of our Nation's fiscal problems. We all see that our Nation is rapidly approaching \$17 trillion in debt. But a few years ago, Washington denied that this path would lead us the way of Europe and we would not experience pay and benefit cuts to solve our problems like Europe has. Well, here we are. Families are living on much less today as a direct consequence of government overspending for so many years and the mandate to get our economy back in balance.

In the past 3 years, Federal spending has been reduced, taxes have gone up, and the economy has actually experienced some rebound; but we're still overspending almost \$700 billion a year, just this 1 year. That's down from \$1.5 trillion in overspending 4 years ago, but it's still \$700 billion in new debt that our Nation will take on this year.

We have to deal with the economic realities that we currently face because the spreadsheet where we see the negative numbers, those numbers represent families and people that face the negative consequences of our inactivity.

The GAO has identified multiple areas of government redundancy that waste money and where we fail to get the job done, but we seem to just nibble at the edges of fixing what is obviously in front of us.

Social Security disability is now 2 years away from insolvency, but no one seems to notice that if we don't fix disability insurance and get the people off disability that are using it just as unemployment, the most vulnerable in our society, the truly disabled, will face benefit cuts along with those folks that are just gaming the system.

The defense acquisition processes increase costs dramatically. Here's how it works. You get a prime contractor who pays a subprime, who pays a subprime, who pays a subprime. By the way, all of those are all the way through the path, and the last person has actually been someone who has done that job for years and years, and everyone knows it. Everyone knows the game, and everyone knows that in every part of that system there's a markup. The taxpayer is the one who loses on it. Let's fix that, because this affects families and lives.

Multiple defense procurement programs in the past several years have failed to produce a final product at all and have again cost taxpayers billions. Usually, our Federal civilian workforce can tell management exactly where we're wasting money, but sometimes no one's listening to them.

Those opportunities to save go untouched, costing more money in the long run and increasing our debt. Debt has a price for all Americans, but especially for the people working for our Nation.

So what does government debt look like today? For thousands in my district facing furloughs, families are cutting back on food, home repair, gas in the car, and every other expense.

A family I spoke with this past weekend will not have a summer vacation because of the furlough. That may not seem like a big deal to some people, but that's a lost significant family moment that they will never get back. Another family with two kids in college is currently trying to determine which kid won't go back to school this fall.

In some families, both parents are furloughed, making the problem twice as large. A single mom that experiences the furlough has a huge decision. This fall and just a month away, they're going to have to buy school supplies and clothes.

It's a serious problem. They're not a person just sitting at home living off Federal welfare, bemoaning the meager size of their check. They're members of our Federal family who work and give their lives to serve the warfighter.

As you would expect in our community, the community is stepping up. Tinker Federal Credit Union is working with families on their loan repayments, churches are providing school supplies, the Regional Food Bank is

giving additional food and is working to step up their provision. Many people, my family included, are giving financially to take care of people in need in this moment. Oklahomans are tough and we're caring, but I'm incredibly frustrated that it's come to this.

Regardless of your thoughts on the number of Federal workers on the payroll, surely we can agree that the families currently employed should be protected as much as possible. These families have carried the stress of this pay cut for a year now. For months they have wondered when and if it would come, and now it's here.

I've written numerous letters to the Department of Defense, asking them to exhaust every option in sequester before they reduce worker time and pay. To their credit, they've replied to all of my correspondence in writing within days, something other agencies in this executive branch could certainly learn from.

I've personally spoken face-to-face with Secretary Panetta, with now-Secretary Hagel, General Dempsey, and Comptroller Hale to find out about other opportunities to save money, like the unobligated balances in the defense budget. I asked for their reconsideration of operations that function on working capital funds. If you're not familiar with that, some departments pay other departments to do their work. Those departments should not be directly affected. The cuts have already happened in the other department. We're cutting twice when we hit on the working capital fund locations.

I asked Secretary Hagel to give more authority to individual installations to make local decisions on spending reductions rather than mandating cuts from the Pentagon.

Congress has already worked with the DOD to reprogram funds and to give maximum flexibility to the Pentagon to protect workers, just like we did with FAA and Homeland Security.

I'm grateful, I am, that the Pentagon has found a way to reduce furloughs from 24 days to 14 days and now to a maximum of 11. But I want to find a way that we can end these furloughs all together for our civilian workers as soon as possible. Three months with a 20 percent cut is tough.

In my last conversation with Senator Hagel, I was pleased to hear that he's still working on these ways. I urge him to continue to cut waste, not worker pay. It's time that we get this issue resolved.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 35 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. AMODEI) at noon.

PRAYER

Chaplain Major Howard Bell, 932nd Airlift Wing, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, we ask for Your divine blessing upon this Congress. We ask that You bless them as they share the privilege that befuddled Moses, challenged Churchill, and has driven some to amazing achievement—leadership.

We thank You for choosing leaders with integrity, who ably lead this country, who motivate us in our work, and ultimately promote freedom in the world.

Give to this Congress the wisdom of Solomon in the decisions they must make; the courage of David when faced with “giants in the land;” the strength of Samson to endure the daily grind; the patience of Job to deal with the ever-changing demands placed upon them; and the compassion of a parent with a hurting child.

Almighty God, we have confidence in our President, our Congress, and in our Nation—and especially in You as we boldly make these requests, trusting in You that they will be accomplished. It is in Your holy name we pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. HARTZLER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Repub-

lic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING CHAPLAIN MAJOR HOWARD BELL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chaplain Howard Bell who led us in the opening prayer.

The tradition of the opening prayer began with the Continental Congress in 1774 when Reverend Jacob Duché of Philadelphia offered a prayer at its start. Since that time, the House has enjoyed over 200 years of service from the Chaplaincy of the House and our guest chaplains.

Chaplain Bell has faithfully served in churches in Missouri and Illinois since 1988. While serving his church, Chaplain Bell was commissioned a chaplain captain in the United States Air Force Reserves in 2002 and was assigned as an Individual Mobilization Augmentation to the 375th Air Wing at Scott Air Force Base.

In 2008, he was deployed to Afghanistan and assigned to the 455th Air Expeditionary Force at Bagram Airfield as the hospital chaplain, where he received the Army Commendation Medal. Since then, he has received the Air Force Commendation Medal, the International Security Assistance Force Medal, and the Afghanistan Enduring Freedom Medal. Chaplain Bell was also appointed wing chaplain of the 932nd Airlift Wing, where he supervises the ministry for nearly 1,200 airmen in the wing.

He is married to Reverend Penelope Barber and has two children, David and Rachel. Currently, he is the pastor of the Farina United Methodist Church in Farina, Illinois, and of the Louisville United Methodist Church in Louisville, Illinois.

It is my honor to welcome a man who encompasses so many of the wonderful qualities of the people of Illinois, and I would like to personally thank Chaplain Bell for offering this morning's prayer.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on either side of the aisle.

STOP THE FURLoughs

(Mr. FORBES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, last week, more than 650,000 DOD civilians began the first of their 11 unpaid furlough days.

Our military—our men and women in uniform—and the civilians who support